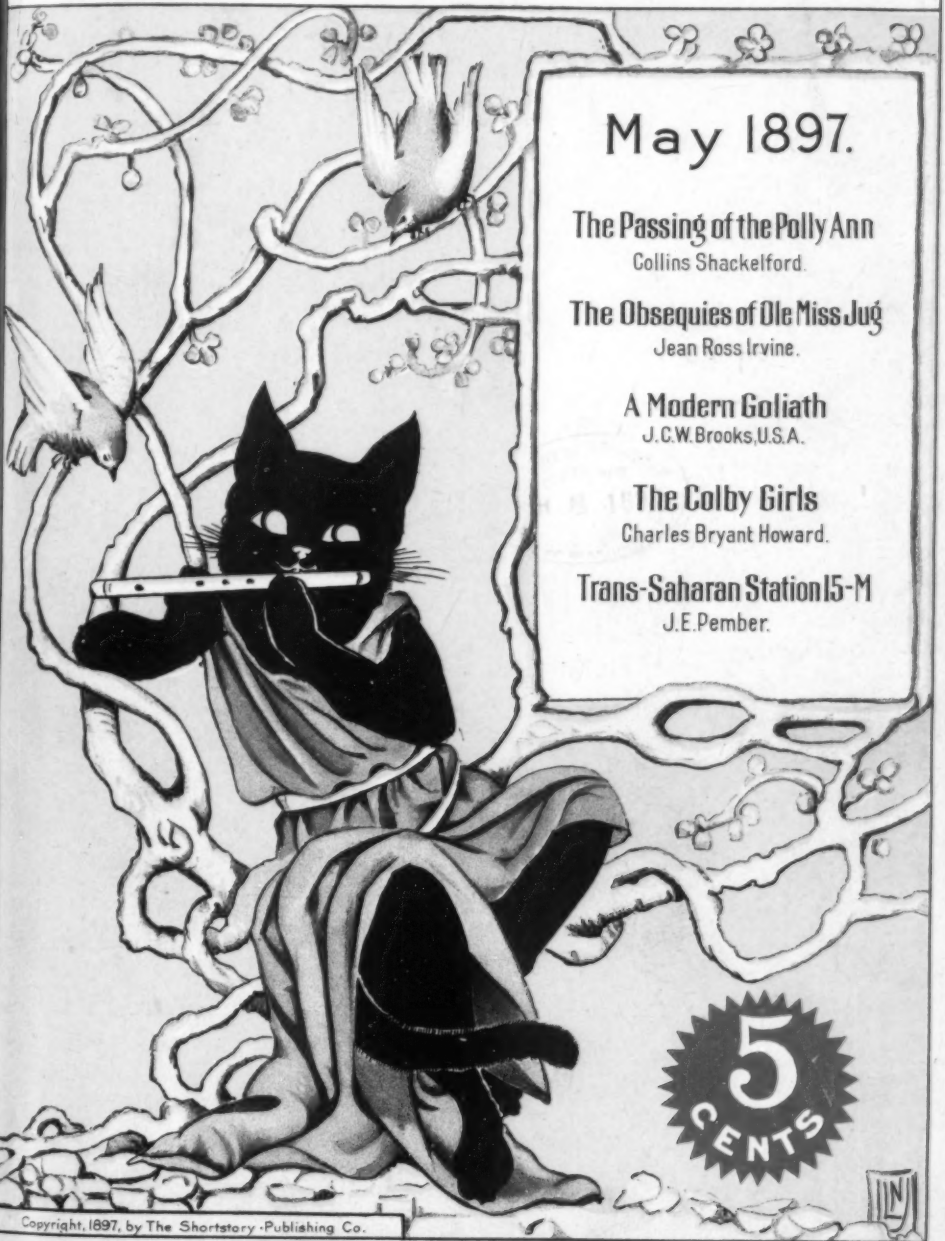
The Black Cat



May 1897.

The Passing of the Polly Ann
Collins Shackelford.

The Obsequies of Ole Miss Jug
Jean Ross Irvine.

A Modern Goliath
J.C.W. Brooks, U.S.A.

The Colby Girls
Charles Bryant Howard.

Trans-Saharan Station 15-M
J.E. Pember.

5 CENTS

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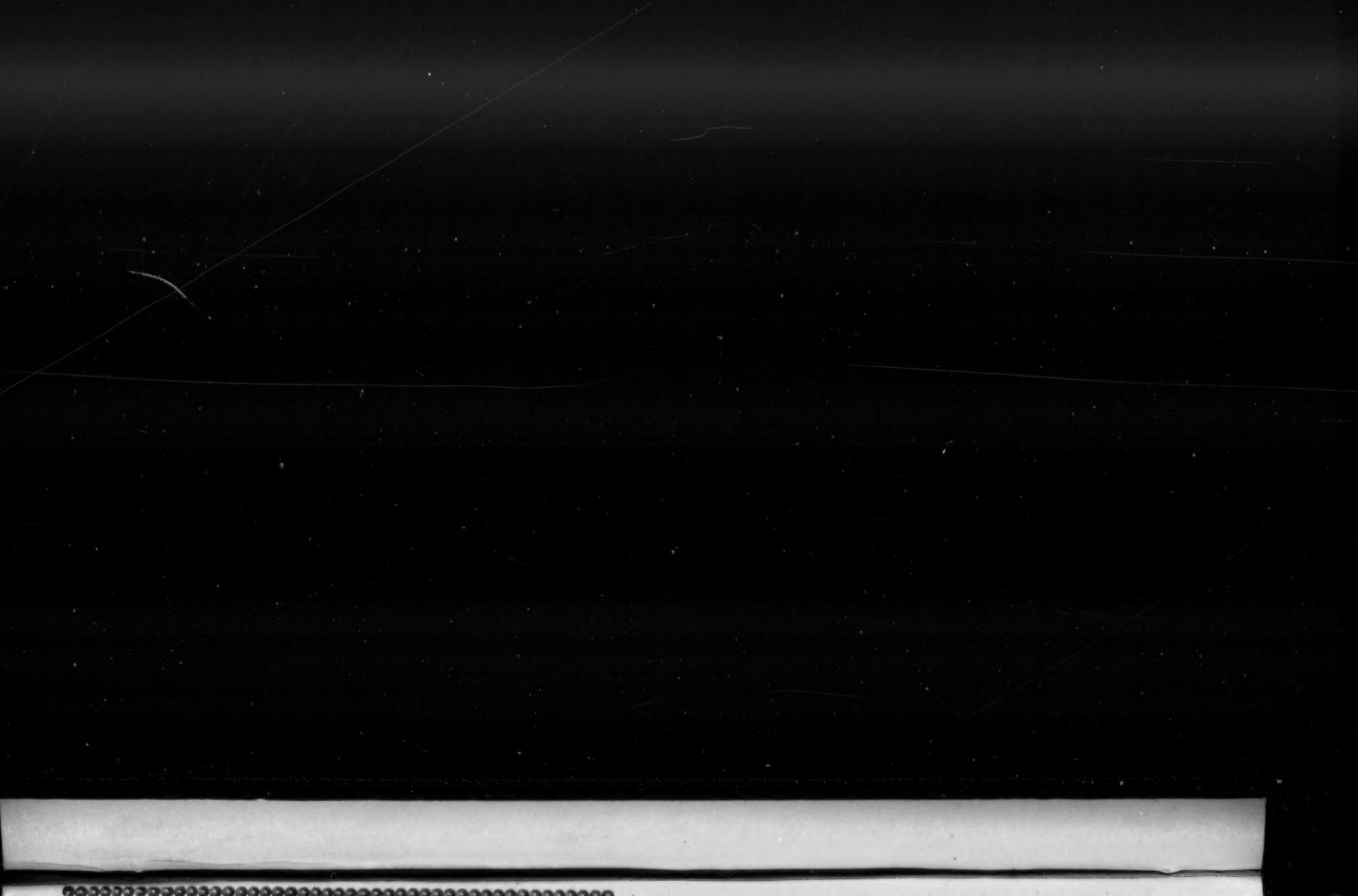

The Black Cat

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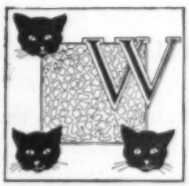
The Passing of the Polly Ann.

BY COLLINS SHACKELFORD.



HEN Captain Amos Dawson came back to New Bedford in the winter of 1879, the strongest desire of his life was to find out what had become of his ship, the *Polly Ann*, which had run away from him in the north Atlantic somewhere about lat. 55, long. 53, a year and a half previously, having two people on board at the time of its disappearance. About the first thing he did was to seek the assistance of Lawyer Orcutt Kimby, by whose advice he had the following advertisement put in half a score of such home and foreign newspapers as were most likely to be read by seafaring men: —

$100 REWARD

For information as to the fate of the whaling brig, *Polly Ann*, which sailed from New Bedford, Mass., May 16, 1877. Address Orcutt Kimby, Attorney at Law, New Bedford, Mass.

A little over seven months had passed since the publication of this appeal, when one day a short, thick-set, smoothly shaved, solemn-faced, swarthy man of perhaps thirty-two years of age, dressed in a landsman's toggery, but with a sea sway to his body, appeared in Mr. Kimby's office.

"Your most obedient," he remarked, with a bow and a backward scrape of the foot as he turned his hat, like a wheel, in his hands. "I'm in from Melbourne a week, and have come about the *Polly Ann* reward."

Mr. Kimby was professionally glad to see him, and, stirred by an unprofessional curiosity in the ocean mystery, gave him hearty greeting.

"My name's Miggleton — Jeremiah Miggleton," said the newcomer, as he slowly seated himself, "and I was the cook on the ship until she ran away with me." He was going to say more, when a framed engraving of a dead chief justice caught his eye. He abruptly left his seat and stood before it in an attitude of meditation.

"Barring wig and nightgown, that would be very like Captain Dawson, eh?" he said, after two or three minutes' thought.

"Quite right," assented the lawyer. "It had never occurred to me before. By the way, it looks as though that hundred dollars would be easily earned."

The man turned his gaze from the picture to Mr. Kimby, and then back again.

"Is the cap'en alive?" he asked, paying no attention to the attorney's remark.

"Oh, yes; I'll send him word that you've turned up."

"I think you'd better not," suggested the sailor, coming close to the other. "I'm sure he'll not want to see me — me above all other men just now."

"Nonsense!" said Kimby. "He's anxious to know what became of his ship."

"But not of the persons left on her, I know. I think he'd rather see the devil than see me. But what's the course to be headed, Mr. Lawyer?"

"You'll have to make your statement, Miggleton. My clerk will take it down —"

"Man or woman?" demanded Miggleton.

"Woman."

"Umph! I thought so. No use; I can't talk before one of them. I'd heard how offices were filled up with the pretty things, and so I wrote it out myself, ship-shape, just as if I was talking it."

He pulled a roll of paper from his pocket and placed it upon the table. "It is true, s' elp me God!" holding up his right hand as if making oath to the document.

"I'll read it over, Miggleton, and you may call in the morning and swear to it. Then we'll begin to look into the matter and —"

"O-h! So we're just going to begin in the matter. Is that it?"

Mr. Kimby nodded and smiled his answer.

"Storm's a-coming if that's the heading," said the sailor, putting on his hat with a strong downward pull, as if it were really "blowing great guns" outside. "You may look for me in the morning, then. My compliments to Cap'en Dawson, if he'll listen. But he won't. Good day."

So great was Mr. Kimby's curiosity in the matter that the door had not fairly closed upon his visitor before he began the reading of the statement.

MIGGLETON'S NARRATIVE.

"My sailor name is 'Jerry Miggs,' but on land I'm Jeremiah Miggleton. I've seen a notice in a paper that somebody was wanted who could tell what became of the whaler *Polly Ann*. I can; and I'm going to from now on. I ought to know, being her cook, and, naturally, sticking to her to the end. I used to be a country schoolmaster, but when my young wife died I lost rudder, compass, bearings, everything. 'The only thing that will save you, my man,' said the doctor, 'is a long sea voyage.' That is how I came to go to sea. I went as cook because I was not a foremast hand, though I had once been to Rio as cabin boy on the old *Penobscot*. But I could cook, and that is how the *Polly Ann* had a berth for me. We sailed the middle of May, 1877, from New Bedford. Two months later we were well up towards Baffin Bay, with over one hundred barrels of oil under the hatches and not a man hurt or a spar cracked. The *Polly Ann* was a good one — 368 tons, square rigged fore and aft, three years old, and provisioned for a two years' voyage. Captain Dawson was a long, lean, sanctimonious chap of fifty, who ought to have been a backwoods preacher, by his looks and talk when he wasn't mad. The men, eight all told, were as good as the average, excepting Maitland, the carpenter. I'll be coming to him after awhile.

"It was a beautiful afternoon in July when the ship's good luck left her. The weather was cold, though the sun had been shining up to noon, when a gray film crept up far away in the northwest, and the sea was dead calm. Along about three o'clock a whale rose about a mile away. The captain looked aloft, and then around the horizon. Nothing was set except the fore topsail and flying jib, for we had been cleaning up from a catch of two days before.

"'I don't particularly like that sky,' he said to the mate, as he looked to the north'ard, 'but I'll chance it,' and, with that, took to the boat in pursuit of the fish, with every man save the carpenter and myself, and rowed away like mad, over water smooth as oil. There didn't seem any risk in all this, so far as I could judge. An hour, at the longest, ought to bring the boat back, and no storm seemed likely in that time. Maitland minded the wheel, and I stood at the heel of the bowsprit when the fish was struck. It started straight for the ship, but when within half a mile swerved to the northeast, and then, after a bit, ran south. It was now astern of the ship instead of ahead. I had gone from the bow, traveling as the fish changed its course, and was leaning on the taffrail, watching, when I felt a puff of ice-cold air in my face, or rather, on my cheek. At the same instant Maitland cried out, 'A gale's coming!' and gave the wheel a spin. Forward, about where the whale was struck, was a great gray wall let down from the clouds above, squeezing the air towards us. I smelt the sweat of a coming storm. A glance astern showed that the whale had been abandoned, and that the men in the boat were rowing for their lives to reach the ship. Which would get to it first — the boat or the fog? The question was speedily decided, for in less than three minutes we were shivering in the icy mist, and the sea was hidden. The *Polly Ann* bobbed up and down like a cork; the masts groaned from peak to keel, and the yards slued and shrieked as if they were tugged at by giants. The air was bitter cold; a fine snow, as fine as if shaken through a sieve, came over everything, and from stem to stern there fell a dull, gray twilight. Far away seemed the cries of the men in the boat as the storm hesitated before striking us. I don't believe they were six hundred feet distant when the roar of the tempest deafened us, and

the flailing winds beat the poor little ship about as if it were a feather. The logy waters went into a passion and pounded away at our starboard bow until the nose of the brig was battered from the course we had been holding, and with topsail and jib swollen with the breath of the storm, the ship shot away like an arrow into the froth and scum of waves and clouds, leaving the captain and his boat's crew to perish by drowning, freezing, or starvation. I saw it was all up with them so far as we were concerned, and that if any life saving were to be done, it must be for our own account. Our condition was a hopeless one, for all that I could see. The little brig went tearing through the great waves, her two sails frozen taut as drum heads, her yards touching the sea as she rolled, and everything awash on deck. It seemed as if no race-horse could travel as fast as the *Polly Ann* was going on that dismal track.

"'I'm afraid it's all up with us,' said Maitland, as after a dozen attempts I lighted the binnacle lamp. 'I'm nearly done for, as it is. I can't hold on much longer.'

"I saw that, for every lurch and plunge of the ship lifted him nearly off his feet, and loosened his hold on the wheel. My heart was full of pity for the poor fellow, and so I told him to go below and rest if he could. He was utterly useless in the condition he was in, and would be better and safer out of the way.

"And right here I want to have my say about this man as I knew him, or supposed I knew him, at that time. He was a passably good-looking, red-headed young fellow, of ordinary height, with a fair complexion and a smooth face. His features were delicate and regular, but the charm of his face lay in his great blue eyes. No matter how meanly you felt towards him, if he turned those sad-looking eyes on you you became weak at once, they were so mild and pleading. He must have been twenty-two or twenty-three years old, and so slight and delicate that I wondered what drove him to sea life, and especially to that on a whaling ship, yet there he was, and shipped as a carpenter. He made pretenses of hammering and sawing, but was that slow and unskillful that somebody — many a time the captain — had to turn in and do the work. The crew would have nothing to do with him when they could avoid it. They disliked him for his weak,

whining voice, for one thing, and more than all because the captain coddled him on the ground that he was sickly, going so far as to give him a berth in his cabin, where he stayed most of the time, reading and sleeping. Once in awhile he would help me in the galley, and from what he did, and the way he did it, I knew he was better than I at cooking. The captain used to talk with him a great deal, but the men, as I have said, would have nothing to do with him. In brief, — for I could tell many a story of his queer ways and doings, — this was the bundle of uselessness left on my hands by the breaking of the storm — a human life that I felt I must save equally with my own.

"After Maitland had given me the wheel I looked at the compass. We were flying to the south; before the gale we had headed north. I knew absolutely nothing about navigation, unless it be knowledge to take my trick at the wheel; Maitland could do that, too. Between us we might be able to hold the ship before the wind. Where we would bring up in the end the Lord only knew. When I looked around me it seemed as if we might bring up any second. One minute we were way up in the air, the wind yelling like mad women through the ropes and spars; then down we slid, as if going to the bottom, until the roar of the storm seemed miles above us, and we heard only the crash of the waves sweeping fore and aft, and the groaning brig shaking herself in the fight and battling like a bulldog to keep on top. Nothing was to be seen; the ship was plowing through a whirling bank of snow, miles deep, judging by our speed. Nothing could be done except to hold on to the wheel and keep her before the wind. I can't tell the horrible lonesomeness of that night, in which I seemed to be the only human being on the face of the earth, with death jogging me at the elbows. I would fall into a doze only to be knocked out of it by a rap on my half-frozen knuckles from the wheel as the bow would begin to swing into the wind. Out of a stupor so heavy that it might have been the beginning of death, I was aroused by being pounded on the back. Morning had come, and Maitland, bundled up in the captain's great clothes, was standing at my side. The wind and the snow still lashed the ship and thundered through the rigging. I could not see a hundred feet away.

"'I've not closed my eyes since I left you,' he shrieked in my ear. 'Oh, this is terrible! Give me hold of the spokes! I'd rather spell you than be alone,' and he pushed away my numb hands.

"'Then I'll go below for a bit of sleep,' I said.

"'No! No! Don't! Jerry Miggs, stay by me! I'm afraid.'

"'But, man, I must sleep or go wild.'

"'Then sleep here, at my feet, where I can see and touch you. There's room enough. Something dreadful will happen if you leave me. I know there will.'

"He was in dead earnest, so I agreed, and crawled down into the cabin for blankets and more clothing, if the captain had left any. I knew he had a bottle of brandy, and rummaged until I found it hidden in a locker. Down went a full glass of the stuff. Then I gathered an armful of bed-clothing and put on an old great-coat that had been part of the bedding in his bunk. One more swig at the bottle, thought I, and I sat down to drink it. No sooner done than my head went over on the table and I slept like one dead, leaving the poor lad alone on deck in the storm. I couldn't help it, and yet I shall never forgive myself for it, for it was as cruel a deed as one man could do to another. As he told me later on, his fear and loneliness for hour after hour drove him crazy for a time. I believe he never got over it, for often afterwards, in his sleep, he would cry out, 'Jerry! Jerry Miggs! Come! for the Lord's sake, come! I'm afraid'; and I never heard him thus without the tears coming to my eyes.

"Well, as I've said, I went instantly to sleep, used up. The next I heard was a noise like the firing at once of half a dozen great cannon, and instantly I lay on my back on the floor in the midst of a lot of glass from what I knew was the smashed-in sky-light. Had the vessel blown up? On second thought I knew that was impossible, as she carried nothing that would cause an explosion. It must have been a minute before I realized that the *Polly Ann* was not in motion, save in a rocking from side to side; that there was no sound of a storm, but instead, a solemn and unnatural stillness. Getting my senses together, I ran up on deck, coming out from the companionway upon a scene of destruction, dimly visible under an opal-colored light, unlike anything of which I had ever heard. The air was cold and clammy; the skin felt

it; the nose breathed it. What I saw made me turn giddy for a second. Both masts were gone down to within twenty feet of the deck. The spars and topmasts lay athwartship after smashing in the bulwarks where they fell. The heel of the bowsprit had been driven back to and ripped up the cook's galley. Stays, shrouds, all sort of top hamper was spread like a great net over the deck, pegged down, as it were, by huge hummocks of ice from stem to stern. No sky was to be seen, and the only proof of a sea was the swashing of water alongside, and a sound as of distant, muffled thunder. Maitland was not in sight. I called without getting a reply. Climbing over the wreckage, I found the poor lad senseless beside the wheel, one hand upon it. He had fallen at his post of duty. Clumsy as he was in his clothing, I carried him down to the cabin, forced down his throat some of the captain's brandy, piled on his body all the bedding I could find, and then returned to the deck, anxious to discover what had happened. All the light there was came through a wall of jagged ice on the port side, that rose, with an inward curving, to a height of at least a hundred feet. There was solid ice on the other side, and at the bow, and ice above, some of it hanging from the ceiling in pendants as big around as a ship's mast. Astern had been an opening a little wider than the ship, and perhaps forty feet high, through which the *Polly Ann* had entered this cathedral of the sea, but the shock of the striking hulk had brought down huge columns of ice, and they lay across this opening, piled up so that but a slit of the sky could be seen through a high-up crevice. Putting this and that together, and seeing the lifted-up bow and the sunken stern, I realized that we had sailed with terrific speed into the cavern of a huge iceberg and were prisoners.

"When I had the facts of this extraordinary situation thoroughly in my head, I was in the depths of despair even while I was full of hope. There seemed no possibility of escape, for even should we be freed from this prison, there was no getting away from the berg, the boats being smashed or lost. We had provisions enough to last two men five years; there was fuel enough, with the oil and the hull of the ship, to last perhaps the same time. After that we could freeze and starve, if we had not died in any other way. To think of five years of under-ice existence

scared me to my marrow; and yet hope kept saying, 'Something will turn up. Look alive now!' I went back to Maitland. He was warm and in a sound sleep. Seeing this, I went on deck again and began to plan. When my mate woke up, hours afterwards, he was in fair condition.

"'Have I talked any?' was the first question he asked. When I shook my head in answer he simply said, 'I'm glad of that,' and turned his back on me.

"I wondered for a second why he should be curious; then I forgot all about it. As soon as he felt strong enough to get around we began to get the wreck into some sort of neatness. Two weeks passed before we had the deck clear, and the ropes and wood cut into shape for fuel. Then came what I had figured out was going to be a danger time — days without work. Maitland became silent and moped in the cabin; he had plenty of food, but he grew thin, had an unnatural brightness in his eyes, and a short, hacking cough grew upon him. I used to rouse him by getting him to run races on deck, to throw a harpoon at a mark, and sticks at the great icicles; sometimes we would climb up into the caves which ran every where into the huge, floating mountain. Out of bits of waste paper I made packs of cards, with which he played hour after hour. I did everything possible to cheer up the poor lad; yet my work seemed useless; he grew weaker and weaker, and his great, sad eyes were seldom dry of tears. Weeks passed, as I knew by my checking off of the daylight, and all the time the berg was slowly drifting, as we could tell by the little whirlpools and eddies around the *Polly Ann;* more light appeared to be filtered through the wall of ice on the port side; every day new rivulets trickled down its rough sides; more water flowed through the old channels, and day and night the tumbling down of pieces of the mountain roared in our ears like thunder. One day there came a moaning and a wailing — far away, then near, then far away again — lasting for hours. It was the fog-bell and whistle of a steamship, sure signs of a warm latitude. Maitland heard it, and coming to me, put an arm on my shoulder and, looking at me through his tears, said: —

"'Jerry, there's the old cries of human life. I shall never see that life again. You may not think so, but it once was very dear

to me; it is now, and I would like to live.' With that he leaned forward and kissed me on the cheek. Then he buried his face in his hands and cried like a child.

"'Hush, lad! Don't take on like that! You'll hear the birds and see the trees and fields again, never fear. Cheer up, mate.'

"'When I die, Jerry, — as I will soon, — promise not to throw me overboard, but bury me somewhere on the ship. You'll not be afraid of my body, will you?'

"I promised, and when I had spoken, the poor boy tottered away and down into the cabin, catching hold of things to steady himself as he went. An hour later I followed him. He was in the captain's berth, buried under a pile of clothes, as if cold. He did not answer when I spoke, and when I pulled away the covering from his face there was blood on his lips and under his cheek a cloth wet with blood. He turned his head and smiled up at me with such a look as I've never seen on a human face.

"'It's not the first, but it's the last, I think,' he whispered, touching the red-stained cloth. 'Oh, I'm so cold, Jerry! Call mother! M-o-t-h-e-r! Tell the captain I forgive him. Ah, if the good Lord will only pardon me! Bring the lamp nearer, Jerry. I'm freezing.'

"I put the light closer, and scared at seeing the poor fellow all a-shiver, I ran at the top of my speed up to the galley, where there was always warm water in the coppers, stirred up the fire, and when the water grew hot, dipped into it a rag, and with it steaming in my hands hurried back to poor Maitland. He lay just as I had left him, face upward, but with a waxy whiteness in it and a pinched look that made him seem a stranger. He opened his eyes, and a faint smile came upon his mouth as he saw me again. As I caught hold of the covering on his chest to throw it back, that I might lay on the hot cloth, he tried to push away my hand.

"'Not now,' he whispered. 'Oh, not now, when I'm dying.'

"I did not understand. How could I? With tough, coarse fingers I tore at the buttons of the woolen shirt and threw it open. One look told a sad story, and I softly pulled back the garment over the snow-white breast of a woman. I glanced at her face. She was staring at me with wide-open eyes, *dead*.

"What I might have done when I made these two discoveries,

had not another misfortune come upon me at the same instant, would be hard to say. As I straightened back from bending over the figure in the berth I saw that the cabin was glowing with a red light, so strong that even the face of the dead girl took from it a faint, rosy hue. I was on deck in half a minute, only to see what nearly drove me crazy. The *Polly Ann* was one great fire amidships, the oil-soaked planks of the deck making a pavement for flames that leaped half way to the roof of the cavern. In my haste to warm the water and get back to my dying mate I must have scattered some of the live coals, and here was the result! The heat was unbearable; the smoke stifling and growing downwards, like a black cloud, from the ceiling. Water was flowing in torrents down the sides of ice and turning to steam as it came near the hull. Every breath was harder to draw, and foot by foot, like a red wind, came the fire. My promise to the dead girl, to bury her in the ship, was as good as kept, for her body would go with the hull, as mine was likely to go.

"From afar came a long, booming note; the iceberg shook deep down under the sea, and crash after crash of falling weights on the roof and starboard wall followed. There was no time for thinking over the cause. The heat was stifling, as if I were inside a huge oven with the fires going under it. Catching up a piece of rope I jumped overboard, and swimming to the stern, lashed myself to the rudder post, holding my head under water as often and as long as possible, preferring to boil rather than roast to death. The end was not long in coming. A mighty puff of air, a pushing of my head under the sea, a quaking of the hulk, a parting of the waters beneath, a crash like falling walls, showed that the heated air in the chamber had blown out the partition between prison and liberty, between darkness and sunshine. Out of the door thus flung open rolled a monstrous ball of jet-black smoke. With the inletting of fresh air the flames took a fiercer grip on the poor little *Polly Ann*, raced along the water's edge, dove into the hold and cabin, and swished like vultures round under the stern to catch me by the head. Casting off my fastening, I worked my way to the great opening, and rolled along the ledge outside until away from the terrible heat. A sound of shouting far away caused me to raise my head. Not a half mile distant lay

a man-of-war, her sails aback, her rigging black with men watching an iceberg spout fire and smoke. Evidently I had been seen, for a boat was dropped from its davits, the dip and flicker of its oars began, and a white foam curled away from its bow, pointed to where I lay. Then I fell back in a dead faint. When I came to my senses I was on board the French frigate *L'Esperance*. From its deck, through a glass, I saw the brave little *Polly Ann* turn in her cradle and sink out of sight in clouds of steam and smoke.

"If anything more than this is known about the brig, it can only be by the spirit of the dead woman whose body went down with the ship.

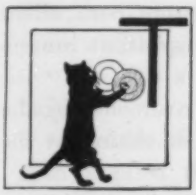
"To all of which I'm ready to make my affidavit.

"JEREMIAH MIGGLETON."

The next morning found Captain Dawson at Lawyer Kimby's office, but no Jeremiah Miggleton appeared then or at any time thereafter. It was not at all necessary, as both had met the day before. But what took place at that meeting is not a matter of history.

The Obsequies of Ole Miss Jug.

BY JEAN ROSS IRVINE.



"THIS sort of day always reminds me of Indians," said Mrs. Allbright, taking a long look around over the hills.

It was an afternoon late in August. A blue haze, the smoke of distant forest fires, lay upon the land, lending to the old familiar hills an air of mystery and remoteness, like that of veiled faces. Down in the valleys and upon the long hillsides the blue faded softly into the gray of the sage brush, and the gray into the vague green of the creek bottom.

Mrs. Allbright, the wife of the manager, and I, the governess, of the Big Red ranch, were sitting on the porch, studying Italian art; rather sleepily, in spite of the excitement attendant on the pronunciation of some of the names.

We had just looked up an unusually exciting one, of six syllables, and were about to relapse into the former chaos of unpronounceable domes, bell towers, and palaces, when Mrs. Allbright abruptly changed the subject by the above remark.

"I don't know why," she continued; "perhaps because it's such a very lazy day."

Ten minutes later we discovered more convincing reasons for the tenor of her thoughts, in the weekly paper, brought by a mounted messenger from the post-office over fifty miles away.

The population of the Big Red comprised three women, four men, and five children; the cowboys, of whom there were about fifty, being absent upon the round-up, while Mr. Allbright was away on a trip to New York. We were sixty-five miles from the railroad and from the nearest town, ten miles from any other ranch, and quite fifty from any one whom we could call a neighbor. And now, as though aware of our unprotected position, the Indians had taken occasion to go on the war path!

"Wilfully and maliciously!" exclaimed Mrs. Allbright, as she sat reading blood-chilling accounts of massacres that had taken place or were about to take place, — accounts which were further supplemented by the messenger's report of the burning that very morning of a ranch only forty miles away.

"Certainly," thought I, as the bearer of ill tidings rode away, "there are several reasons why one's thoughts *might* wander towards Indians." But I said nothing, and we were both silent for a long time, Mrs. Allbright attending, in the spirit, at innumerable massacres and house burnings.

At last she arose and went into the house, overcome by the thought of the five young Allbrights being led in chains by the conquering Sitting Bull.

"I am sure," she exclaimed, coming back to the door, "if there were any real danger, our friends in town would send for us." Then, a little huskily, "I don't know what to do," she concluded, with a tell-tale catch of her breath.

At the other end of the porch sat the five little Allbrights in a circle, holding a solemn consultation. There was Tony, the eldest, the twelve-year-old; the twins, aged ten; Billy, seven years old; and Ethelbert Van Twiller Allbright, aged five. They were all looking very sober, and each child was decorated with a generous piece of black silk, torn off the bottom of an old skirt. In the center of the circle stood an empty box, over which were draped the remains of the skirt, and which probably represented to Tony's cultivated mind a bier. The twins shared between them a very crumpled handkerchief, with which they occasionally rubbed their eyes.

"What *is* the matter, children?" I exclaimed, as I took in the details of the scene.

Tony was silent until he had marshaled his features into a state of due solemnity; then, in a voice carefully modulated to fit the occasion, he replied, "At the break of day Miss Jug departed this life."

"She has gone over the big divide," added the twins, who never let pass an opportunity of using a cowboy phrase.

"Ole Miss Jug," as the children called her, was a portly dog, of great age and immovable dignity. In the opinions of the five

young Allbrights she "was as old as the oldest tree." Certainly she was as old as the oldest of the mourners. Her reign over the animal kingdom of the ranch had been long and prosperous; for years she had presided with justice and equity over the affairs of cats infesting the wood pile; repelled from her domains the invasions of goats, cows, and horses; and relentlessly inflicted punishment upon the hens who sought to destroy the flower beds. And now, as Tony would have said, in the fulness of time she had gone whence no dog returneth.

"She was a mighty fine dog," said one of the twins sorrowfully.

"You bet she sure was!" exclaimed the other, whereupon they both applied the handkerchief, emerging a moment later with very red eyes, but quite composed.

"And," said Tony, visibly brightening, "we are going to give her the very finest funeral we ever had."

At this the four other young Allbrights also brightened, and a few moments later the five marched around into the back yard, where the body lay in state, and there I could hear them cheerfully discussing the arrangements for the funeral of the deceased Miss Jug.

Had Tony lived some hundred years ago, he would have become pope, or certainly a cardinal, so great was his love of ritual. The burial of a hen under his direction became a most imposing ceremony. Theatricals were his passion. Robed in a scarlet tablecloth, and armed with a bread knife, he would recite Hamlet's soliloquy in such a melancholy voice, and with such expressive motions of his weapon, that the twins would be thrown into quite an ecstasy of horror, while the younger part of the audience cowered in terror under the bedclothes, the exhibitions taking place generally at bedtime, being more impressive by candle light.

About five o'clock I heard the funeral pass my window.

"The choir will now sing an anthem," said Tony.

And as they marched away I could hear five young voices rising and falling in a tune which, though it was an anthem, sounded suspiciously like "Polly Wolly Doodle."

. . . . . .

Late that evening, Mrs. Allbright and I sat alone on the cool

piazza, rocking, thinking, waiting. As long as daylight had lasted, and the little Allbrights had borne us company, we had kept up a pretense of cheerful conversation. But now that the small folks were tucked away in bed, and the men had foregathered in the barn, we had relapsed into a silence whose gloom was accented by the deep minor chords of night, the croaking of frogs, the distant lowing of thirsty cattle waiting for the rains, and now and then the hungry howls of the coyotes, holding revel further down the creek.

By this time it was quite dark. Even the long, narrow sea of smoky green that had gleamed so long over the western hills had faded. About the top of a nearer peak, that of a rocky hill, a quarter of a mile or so to the east of us, which Tony had christened Golgotha, shone a faint radiance, the first rays of the rising moon.

Suddenly, with a faint scream, my companion gripped my arm. "Look!" she whispered, "the Indians!"

Even as she spoke, from the crown of Golgotha there shot up a tongue of flame, waving and twisting far into the distance. Close upon the sight there followed a long, echoing war-whoop; then there was wafted to our ears a chorus of muffled shrieks and yells, accompanied by what seemed a wild beating of drums.

"Quick, Nell!" cried Mrs. Allbright hoarsely, "run to the barn for the men. I'll wake the children and bring them down."

It seemed a thousand years before I reached the house again, followed by the men, hastily armed and equipped for a possible siege.

By this time the fire on the hill was blazing fiercely, and against its ruddy background we could see grotesquely outlined dark blanketed figures leaping wildly in some barbaric dance. Every moment the flames rose higher, the figures leaped more wildly, the yelling and drum beating sounded more distinctly, mingled from time to time with far-away peals of heart-stilling laughter. To add to the horror of it all there was now wafted to us from time to time upon the night air, cool and heavy with the scent of wild flowers, a sickening odor — the odor of burning flesh!

At the moment of this dreadful discovery, Mrs. Allbright, pale and sobbing, rushed down the stairs and out on the piazza.

"The children — they're not in their rooms," she cried. "I've looked for them everywhere —"

"O Norah," — to the cook, who stood in the doorway, her florid face actually paling with terror, — "have you seen my children?"

Norah pointed a quaking finger to the fire on the hill. "There — I saw them steal away that way an hour ago," she gasped. "They was —"

But before she could finish, Mrs. Allbright was out of the door and rushing toward Golgotha, her white shawl gleaming in the darkness. Straightway, in spite of those who would have restrained me, I plunged after her, following down the path, across the creek, and up the steep ascent in the wake of that fluttering white signal.

We could not see the fire now, but the smoke streamed blood red over our heads, and we could hear the cries of the victim and smell the burning flesh. As we neared the top of the hill the hideous shrieks suddenly ceased, the drum was silenced, all was quiet save for the fierce crackling of the flame.

"They have seen us," I thought, and gripping Mrs. Allbright's arm from behind, stood for a moment motionless and peered ahead.

Just over the black rocks of the hill top gleamed the full moon, like a great bloody sun. Suddenly there appeared upon a rock right above us, full against the broad, copper orb of the moon, a dusky savage. For an instant he stood motionless, a great knife gleaming in his uplifted hand, and his blanket blowing against his bare legs.

Then down to us poor women trembling below floated these words: "To be or not to be, that is the question!"

It was Tony's voice!

In a flash the truth burst upon us. We had been witnessing one of Tony's dramas.

What a sight met our gaze as we rushed up onto the top of the hill! There in the midst of the fire lay all that was mortal of Miss Jug, fast falling into ashes. Seated upon the rocks were the four little Allbrights, each robed in a white sheet and armed with a great tin pan. And upon the highest rock stood Tony, garbed in the red tablecloth and carrying the bread knife.

"O children!" cried their mother, sinking down upon the

rocks. "Why *didn't* you tell us what you were going to do? You have frightened us nearly to death."

Dignity and tin pans were thrown to the winds, while the four Allbrights made a frantic attempt to comfort their mother.

"We's just been a-burnin' ole Miss Jug," exclaimed the twins.

"It's a cremation," corrected Tony with dignity.

"These," pointing to the sheeted Allbrights, "are the Heavenly Choir. I'm the High Priest of the Moon. And —" pausing dramatically, he drew the tablecloth closer about him, and indicating the moon, the fire, the Heavenly Choir, and himself with one sweep of the bread knife, the High Priest concluded in a deep, solemn voice, "These is the obsequies of ole Miss Jug. Let her R.— I.— P."

A Modern Goliath.

BY J. C. W. BROOKS, U. S. A.

LIEUTENANT WARNER was not born to be a soldier. One month on the plains had been enough to convince him of that fact,—a fact which was emphasized by the ever-increasing irksomeness of the life as years dragged by. Had he been graduated high enough in his class at West Point to have chosen an Eastern artillery station, it might have been very different, but to remain an infantryman, cooped up in little adobe posts, with an occasional scout over the barren alkali desert, would, he felt sure, in the end drive him mad.

As if to aggravate the young lieutenant's unhappy condition, during his third year on the plains he fell desperately, hopelessly in love with the steady blue eyes and frank, unaffected manner of Frances Wright, the colonel's niece and ward, who was spending the summer at Fort Griswold. Hopelessly, not because she was the colonel's niece, nor because of any discouragement on her part, but because the young lieutenant felt that no self-respecting man could ask or expect a girl accustomed to the refinements and pleasures of city life to give up all these for an existence of endless discomforts and ennui.

As for promotion, Lieutenant Warner knew only too well that in the oft-thumbed Army Register, which opened of its own accord to the pages of his regiment, the 26th Infantry, he stood exactly number seven from the top of the line of first lieutenants; and careful study of the list of retirements had convinced him that even figuring in the most favorable way possible, counting every ailing officer as certain of causing a vacancy, he could not bring the time necessary for his promotion to a captaincy below a number of years too great to be sanely contemplated.

Certainly, the young officer used to tell himself bitterly, under these conditions it would be the height of folly to ask a girl to wait for him till his bars should come.

It was just when Warner's despondency had sunk almost to the point of despair that light shone from an unexpected quarter. In poring over the list of retirements one day his eyes fell on a vacancy in the commissary department, to occur in only a few weeks' time. A telegram sent at a venture to an influential senator who was also a friend of his father's had struck the iron while it was hot. By an answering telegram he learned that his message had been handed to Senator Lane just as he was starting to see the President, and that the senator had taken advantage of the occasion to lay Warner's name before that dignitary, who had promised to consider it.

All of which put so different a face on life that during the succeeding month Lieutenant Warner felt free to spend every available moment with Frances, and though he did not speak a word of love, he knew that she must understand his feelings.

During the same month news arrived that a small band of Indians on a neighboring reservation had jumped their limits, and that two troops of cavalry had been sent in pursuit. This tiny war cloud suddenly developed with marvelous rapidity; all of the available troops in the immediate vicinity were ordered to take the field and those at the post were directed to hold themselves in readiness to join the rest at a moment's notice.

Close upon this news, the young officer received a second telegram from Senator Lane, telling him that the President had, that day, sent Lieutenant Warner's name before the Senate to fill the captain's vacancy in the commissary department; and that evening, after telling Frances of his good fortune, he asked her to share it with him. Perhaps the question was not altogether unexpected. At any rate, when he left he carried with him not only her promise to become his wife, but the wholehearted approval of the colonel, with whom he had long been a favorite.

Nor did the chain of fortune break here. Before dawn on the

following morning the troops at Fort Griswold were ordered to take the field at once; and when, after several days of rapid marching, — during which their forces were joined by others in the field,— the scouts finally located the hostiles in a pocket in the hills, Warner was given the command of the detachment which was to attack the Indians in the rear at daybreak.

In the inky darkness he succeeded in leading his men to their position, where he directed them to conceal themselves, choosing for himself a large rock, which, while protecting him from view, at the same time afforded an admirable prospect of the ground ahead. Kneeling there in the blackness, motionless, yet nervously alive to everything that was going on around him, he felt his excited brain burn with visions of the courageous acts by which he hoped to make himself worthy of a noble woman's love.

How the moments dragged for those crouched behind the rocks and shrubs, scarcely daring to breathe, lest they should give a premature alarm! How they strained their eyes peering into the intense darkness which imperceptibly gave way before the approaching dawn, in whose uncertain light they imagined they saw Indian forms skulking behind every bit of cover! Almost it seemed that years passed instead of hours before the signal shot rang out in the clear morning air, followed immediately by a general rattle of musketry, telling that the conflict had begun.

At that sound the lieutenant sprang to his feet, and, shouting to his men to follow him, he rapidly led the line deployed as skirmishers toward the top of the hill. The whistle of a bullet over their heads showed that they were discovered, but they never swerved in their onward rush. Several shots followed with no more effect than the first, when suddenly Lieutenant Warner felt a sting as of a red-hot iron drawn across his forehead. Instinctively he put up his hand; it encountered something moist and warm, and bringing it down he saw that it was covered with blood. He was wounded, how severely he knew not! A dizzy sensation began to creep upon him, accompanied by a cold perspiration, but he fought it down, and still pressed forward.

Suddenly he stumbled, fell, struggled to his feet, ran on a rod and fell again.

Realizing that his senses were fast leaving him, the young officer called to the sergeant, and directing him to take command and push on to the front, he dragged himself behind a rock. His last thought before he lost consciousness was: "If I am dying, I am at least dying a soldier's death, and one which will make Frances proud of me."

How long he lay there he did not know. When he again opened his eyes he saw Dr. Wise, accompanied by the four litter bearers, bending anxiously over him, while the former with a damp sponge washed away the clotted blood from Warner's forehead.

"Has the fight ended?" the young officer inquired.

"Yes," answered the surgeon, and at the same time the lieutenant saw his face harden.

"I guess you won't need the litter as much as some of the others," he said curtly, giving his patient a large drink of whisky and helping him to his feet. "Come to the hospital tent when you get in camp, and I will dress your wound," he added, and directing the litter bearers to follow, started up the hill.

On examination the wound proved to be only a flesh one, and the lieutenant was able to return to duty at once. During his homeward march he was congratulated by every one upon his narrow escape. While regretting that he had fallen so early in the fight, still the young officer felt that he had won his coming bars. And as he sat at breakfast on the day following the return of the expedition, his mind was wrapt in beatific visions of early promotion and removal to a cozy city home, presided over by Frances. Just as he rose from the table an orderly entered with a message that the commanding officer would like to see the lieutenant as soon as was convenient.

Five minutes later the young lieutenant entered the colonel's office, and was surprised to find there Dr. Wise as well as his superior officer.

"You sent for me, sir?" he said, addressing the colonel.

"I did, Mr. Warner; read this," he replied, holding out a sheet of legal cap paper. The young officer took it and read: —

CHARGE AND SPECIFICATION preferred against Lieutenant William A. Warner, 26th Regiment of Infantry, U. S. Army.

CHARGE: Cowardice, in violation of the 42d Article of War.

SPECIFICATION: In that Lieutenant William A. Warner, Company K, 26th Regiment of Infantry, U. S. Army, having been intrusted with the command of a detachment of troops at the battle of Rocky Run, did, after receiving an insignificant scratch, possibly caused by a pebble thrown up by a glancing bullet, shamefully abandon said command, and did conceal himself behind a rock until the battle was over.

This at Rocky Run about 5 A. M., July 17, 18—.

JAMES A. WISE,
Surgeon, U. S. Army.

WITNESSES:

Major Thomas Agen, 26th Infantry.
Surgeon James A. Wise.
Assistant Surgeon John Bennett.
Sergeant Michael Barney.

A wave of horror swept over the young officer as he realized the full import of that little sheet of paper.

Instead of being acclaimed a hero he was charged with being a coward!

His knees shook under him; he rested his hand on the back of a chair for support.

"You may sit down, Mr. Warner," said the colonel kindly; and then, as the lieutenant availed himself of the permission, "Have you anything to say?" he added.

Though half dazed by this blow to his reputation, the accused man realized that, to avoid a court martial, he must vindicate himself then and there. "The charge is false!" he exclaimed. "I led my troops in person from the instant the signal shot was fired until I lost consciousness as the result of a wound."

"But Dr. Wise says that your wound would not have disabled a child. Is not that correct, doctor?"

The latter nodded.

"But I was at the head of my troops when I was shot," Warner persisted desperately.

"Why, then, did you not stay there?" rejoined the colonel.

"I can merely repeat that I lost consciousness as the result of

a wound," the young officer said doggedly, though already he could see that his assertion carried no weight.

"But both surgeons declare that your wound could not have caused you to lose consciousness," replied the colonel sternly.

The accused man saw that in addition to being charged with cowardice he was now suspected of lying. He drew himself up haughtily and said: —

"I have nothing more to say."

"Then you can go to your quarters in arrest," commanded the colonel.

Ten minutes later the lieutenant entered his quarters a disgraced officer.

For hours he sat alone in his parlor and gazed at the floor in hopeless despair. No one came to express sympathy or offer aid. Already he foresaw that his whole life would be spent alone. No one would associate with a coward! His captain's commission would not be confirmed, and he would be lucky if he did not also lose his lieutenant's bars! Frances would never marry him!

At this thought he sprang to his feet. "I am not guilty!" he cried aloud. "I will fight the charge to the bitter end! I will defeat the enemy who is plotting to ruin me! I will — "

But here like a flash a horrible suspicion darted through his brain. In a moment everything was clear. His secret enemy was no other than Dr. Wise! Before this the young officer had suspected that the surgeon was in love with Frances. Now he felt sure that because he had failed to win her the physician hoped, by blasting Warner's reputation, to revive a lost chance.

But how refute this terrible charge? Dr. Wise had succeeded in converting his assistant to his side of the case; both would testify against the accused man, and he had no evidence to offer in support of his statements.

In all the world he could think of only one man who might help him,— George Maynard, his classmate and inseparable comrade during his whole cadetship. Maynard had been by far the brightest fellow in his class, and was easily graduated at the head; but shortly after leaving West Point, at the wish of his father, Judge Maynard, he had resigned from the army, studied law, and even in so short a time had won the reputation of being one of the

most brilliant young lawyers in New York City. Yes, undoubtedly Maynard could help him if any one could.

Without a moment's delay the accused man telegraphed his old friend to come to his aid. Then began an interval of eager expectancy, that grew to awful suspense as day after day failed to bring any answer.

To add to the blackness of his outlook, the day after he was summoned to the colonel's office Warner received a note from his superior officer declaring that the lieutenant must consider his engagement to Frances at an end. Warner had expected this, but, nevertheless, it was a terrible blow. He had even walked over to his bureau, taken his loaded revolver from the drawer and looked at it longingly. Only the knowledge that the act would, in the world's eyes, amount to an admission of guilt restrained him from putting the weapon to his head and pulling the trigger.

Hardly had he replaced the weapon in the drawer, when the bell rang and a messenger handed him a second note. It was from Frances! Tremblingly he opened it and read: —

Dearest Will: Uncle has just told me of your trouble, and that he has written to you breaking our engagement.

I told him that the engagement was made by you and me, and that it could be broken only by one of us.

I believe implicitly in you, and no matter how the court decides, it cannot shake my faith.

You could never be a coward!

Ever yours,

FRANCES.

That was all; but as the young officer pressed the little note reverently to his lips it was with the vow that, with this as a talisman, he would establish his innocence, if it was within human means to do so.

Days passed; the court was ordered and its members began to arrive, but no word came from Maynard, who, Warner was convinced, could never have received his telegram. By this time he had given up all hope of his old friend's coming, and the evening before the trial sat at his desk, as on many evenings before, trying to arrange his own defense, to devise some means of giving

weight to his denial of the charge. Plan after plan was considered and rejected, until finally he rose and was pacing the floor despairingly when the door opened, and in walked Maynard.

With a bound the young officer threw his arms around his visitor, and gave him a hug like that of a schoolboy. To Warner's excited questioning the newcomer explained that he had been on a hunting expedition in the West when the telegram reached him, and that he had arrived before his reply.

Upon hearing that the trial was set for the following day, he plunged at once into the midst of things, asking first of all for a copy of the charges. After reading this carefully he asked: "Are you guilty or not?"

"Before God, I am not guilty!" Warner exclaimed.

"That is good," he replied, "I'd hate to take a guilty case."

The accused man then proceeded to give a detailed account of the whole affair. He began with the departure from the post and described every incident, even every emotion he had felt. Finally he showed the wound, of which there now remained but a thin, red line across a forehead made doubly pale by anxiety.

"You see, George," he said in conclusion, "if Dr. Wise can prove this charge against me, and the chances are certainly in favor of his doing so, I shall be dismissed from the army and he will be free to press his suit with Frances; but, of course, the reasons I have for believing the whole charge a conspiracy can never be presented to the court, for I would rather die than drag Frances's name into the affair."

As he finished, "I think that you are wrong in your suspicion concerning Dr. Wise" said Maynard (Warner shook his head); "he holds too high a reputation to be guilty of such a contemptible act. He undoubtedly believes the truth of what he asserts. The whole case hinges upon establishing the fact that you lost consciousness. You say that you did, and the two doctors say that you did not. I must hear their side of the case." Thereupon he snatched up his hat and left the house.

Two hours later he returned looking, so Warner thought, very grave. He seemed disinclined to talk, and, for an hour, while his companion smoked and meditated in silence, he sat at a desk making pencil notes and occasionally asking a question.

"Has any one here a file of any New York daily paper?" he inquired after a long silence.

Upon being directed to the post library for what he wished, he again left the house with no further explanation.

When he returned he went straight to bed, and neither then nor up to the time that the court assembled would he express any opinion of Warner's chances, or even let fall a hint as to the line of defense he proposed to adopt.

Promptly at nine the next morning the two friends entered the court-martial room. All the members of the court were present, arrayed in full-dress uniform. At the head of the table sat the court's president, Colonel Ellsworth, of the 11th Cavalry, while on his right and left alternately, according to rank, were the other twelve members; the judge advocate sat at the foot of the table surrounded by his books and papers.

In the spectators' seats were crowded an assembly that Warner knew included practically all the post people, though he had looked that way but once. In that glance he had, however, caught Frances's eye; she was sitting beside the colonel looking very pale, but it seemed to Warner that he read trust and hope in her face.

Well, he was glad if she could hope. He could not!

Promptly upon the arrival of the young officer and his lawyer, the judge advocate announced that he was ready to proceed. Thereupon the president called the court to order, and all the members rose, and with ungloved right hands raised, swore to "well and truly try and determine according to evidence," and to "administer justice without partiality, favor, or affection."

The first witness against Lieutenant Warner was the commanding officer of the expedition, Major Agen.

He testified to intrusting the lieutenant with the command of the detachment of men, to instructing him to conduct it to the rear of the Indian camp, conceal the men there until the firing of the signal shot, and then push up and cut off retreat. His testimony contained nothing adverse to the case of the accused, and he was allowed to withdraw without any cross-examination.

The next witness was Sergeant Barney, to whom Lieutenant Warner had turned over the command of the detachment upon

receiving his wound. He swore to the fact that until he received his wound Warner had carried out the commanding officer's instructions to the letter.

"Immediately after the first few shots were fired," said the sergeant, "I saw blood running from the lieutenant's forehead. He put up his hand and got blood all over it, and turned very white. He said as how he was wounded, and for me to take command, and then he staggered behind a big rock and sat down. We went on, and didn't see him again."

The accused man noticed several slight expressions of surprise when Maynard allowed this witness, also, to leave the stand without asking him a question.

There was a ripple of excitement as the judge advocate called Surgeon Wise to the stand. He was the prosecution's main witness, and would give the most damaging evidence.

"At the close of the fight," began the doctor, after having been duly sworn by the judge advocate, "Sergeant Barney reported to me that Lieutenant Warner had been left in the rear of the hostile camp, shot through the head. I took four hospital attendants and a litter and proceeded as rapidly as possible to the place indicated by the sergeant. As I approached the spot I was much relieved" (at this Warner smiled a cynical smile) "to see Lieutenant Warner sitting behind a large rock. He asked me if the fight was over, and I replied that it was. I wiped the blood from his forehead, expecting to find at least a deep gash, but instead there was a mere scratch. Lieutenant Warner was still pale and trembling, but on hearing that the fight was over, and after taking a drink of whisky, he braced up, and was able to walk with ease. I at once saw that the scratch on his forehead could not have been made by a bullet, but, desiring to consult the other surgeon before taking any steps in the matter, I directed Lieutenant Warner to report at the hospital tent in camp. When he reported there Assistant Surgeon Bennett, to whom I had confided my suspicions" ("Just as I thought," whispered Warner to Maynard), "aided in examining the wound, and he confirmed my opinion that the wound had not been caused by a bullet, but that it was probably done by a stone thrown up by a spent ball. However caused, we both agreed that it was a mere graze, barely breaking

the skin, that it could not possibly have caused more than a slight inconvenience to Lieutenant Warner, and, under no circumstances, could it have incapacitated him from leading on his command.

"Under the circumstances I felt obliged to prefer charges of cowardice, because in no other way could I account for Lieutenant Warner's desertion of his command in the face of danger."

While the doctor's testimony was being given not a sound could be heard in the room; every one knew as well as did the young officer himself that if the surgeon's testimony could be broken down Warner would be acquitted; if not broken, his conviction was certain.

He glanced at the doctor's face, but saw only cold, pitiless determination.

"I have no questions to ask," said Maynard as the doctor finished.

A murmur of astonishment came from the spectators and even from the members of the court itself, amazed by what seemed a surrender of the whole case. As to the accused man, he controlled his first impulse to spring to his feet, telling himself that probably Maynard had decided that the case was hopeless, and that an appeal to the clemency of the court, based on his previous record, was the only remaining resource.

Assistant Surgeon Bennett was the last prosecuting witness. He merely confirmed the senior surgeon's testimony and was also allowed to depart without any cross-examination; whereupon the judge advocate announced that "the prosecution here rests."

To Warner's utter amazement, Maynard himself requested to be sworn as the first witness for the defense. Amid a wondering silence, the young lawyer took the stand, and, drawing from his pocket two newspaper clippings, said: —

"I hope the court will pardon me for presenting some apparently irrelevant matter, but I will explain later on its connection with the case." Then unfolding the first slip, he read: —

"'During the exhibition artillery drill yesterday, at the West Point Military Academy, Miss Knowles, the daughter of Banker Knowles, was saved from a fearful death by the coolness, skill, and heroism of Cadet Warner of the graduating class.

"'Miss Knowles was driving a spirited horse in a dog cart,

when the animal took fright at the firing of the guns and dashed wildly across the plain, heading directly for that precipitous bank known as Lover's Leap.

"'The spectators awaited with horror the impending disaster.

"'Walking along the road by the cliff was Cadet Warner. Having been laid up for some time with a sprained ankle, he was excused from the drill. He saw the danger in which Miss Knowles was placed, and hobbled, as fast as his lame ankle would allow, to intercept the runaway.

"'Cadet Warner is acknowledged to be one of the best horsemen and all-around athletes in his class. As the horse passed him, with a bound he seized its mane, and practising the trick taught in the riding hall, he swung himself on the horse's back. In that position he had splendid control of the terrified animal, and succeeded in bringing him to a standstill on the very brink of the awful leap.'

"I saw the whole affair," continued Maynard, "and do swear to the accuracy of the account. That one act will, I think, convince the court that, at the time he was about to graduate, Lieutenant Warner was no coward."

After the excitement had quieted down a little he resumed: — "Last winter, at about four o'clock one afternoon, a fire broke out in one of the down-town tenements in New York. For awhile it was beyond the control of the fire department, but it was thought that every one was out of the doomed building. I will now read the newspaper account of what took place.

"'The flames,' says the paper, 'were pouring from the second and third stories, when suddenly the figure of a woman was seen at a fifth-story window. A cry of horror rose from the spectators. The firemen stretched a canvas and called upon the woman to jump, but she had dropped half out of the window, unconscious and unable to help herself. It seemed as if no human power could save her. The flames were so intense that no ladders could be placed against the building; several firemen tried to ascend the staircase, but were driven back by the flames and smoke. Just as all hope had been given up a man was seen on the steel framework of a building in the process of erection across the street.

"'A derrick used for hoisting stood on top of the building. The man seized one of the guys and, with a running start, attempted to swing himself across the narrow street. Twice he tried and failed, while the crowd held its breath. The third time he succeeded in grasping the sill of the window where the woman lay. In he climbed, and reappeared with a fire-escape rope. He quickly tied the rope under the woman's arms, and then rapidly yet carefully lowered her while the firemen stood below with outstretched canvas. When the limp figure was yet ten feet from the ground a tongue of flame burst from a window of the floor below which the hero stood and burnt the rope; the woman dropped safely into the canvas, but the man's escape was cut off. Was it a life for a life?

"'For a moment it looked so, but the brave fellow was equal to the emergency. He had retained possession of the guy of the derrick and easily swung himself back to the new building. A number of reporters awaited him at the bottom of the main ladder, but he must have come down another way, for he managed to slip off unseen.

"'In spite of repeated efforts no one has succeeded in discovering his identity, and as he has not responded to the many requests, it seems to be his desire to remain an unknown hero!'

"Had it not been for this trial," resumed Maynard, "his name would probably have never been known. The fire occurred but two blocks from my law office, and I saw the whole affair from beginning to end. The burst of flame that burnt the rope lit up the man's face and I recognized it. As it was his evident desire to keep his name out of the papers, I respected it and remained silent. Now, however, I feel it my duty to give his name. You will remember that, at the time of the fire, Lieutenant Warner was in New York on leave. He was the 'unknown hero.'"

As he finished, the spectators burst into a tumult of applause in which Warner thought the members of the court would have joined, had it been dignified for them to do so.

"You can see," said Maynard, when the applause had ceased, "that no change in the character of Lieutenant Warner had occurred from the time he was graduated up to last winter. It would

be very strange if within the last few months he had changed from a hero to a coward. I think I can show that he has not.

"Will the senior surgeon again take the stand?"

Dr. Wise did as he was requested.

"Will you please examine Lieutenant Warner in a general manner, paying particular attention to his heart?" Maynard asked.

Though unable to understand the purport of this request, Dr. Wise complied, and after completing his examination reported that, as far as he could determine from such an examination, "Lieutenant Warner was in perfect health."

"That is all," said Maynard. "Now I wish to explain to the court how Lieutenant Warner received his wound."

Stepping a few feet to the right of the accused man and in front of him, he placed a dark object on the floor. "That," he continued, "probably represents approximately the position of the pebble which, the doctors say, wounded Lieutenant Warner. When struck by the bullet the stone was thrown up in this direction."

Here Maynard picked up the pebble and carried it on a line to the young officer's forehead. As he did so Warner felt a sharp, stinging sensation where the wound had been.

"Oh!" exclaimed Maynard in alarm, "I have cut you with the pebble. I am very sorry."

"Never mind, it is a mere scratch," the other replied, drawing his hand across his brow, and again feeling, as he had on the battlefield, the warm moisture of the blood. As he brought his hand down he saw a few drops of blood on it and drew out his handkerchief to wipe them off. For the first time he noticed that the room was hot and close. The strain of the trial had tired him and he felt that he must sit down. He reached out for a chair, but too late. The room swam before him. He staggered and fell forward unconscious.

When, a few moments later, he came to, he saw the doctor and Maynard bending over him. At this point the court wished to adjourn, but the lieutenant protested that he would soon be all right, while Maynard insisted on continuing.

In ten minutes the young officer was able to take his seat, and Maynard resumed his place in the witness stand.

"When I was the cadet captain in command of Company 'A,'"

he began, "it happened that one day, just before marching out to parade, I was standing in front of my company playing with my sword. In swinging it I accidentally pricked Lieutenant Warner's hand, and through his glove drew a drop of blood about the size of a pin head. A moment later Lieutenant Warner plunged forward unconscious and had to be carried to the hospital. At the time I did not connect the drop of blood with the fainting, but upon investigating this case that drop of blood came to my mind, and I was sure that I held the solution of the present misunderstanding.

"You all heard the doctor pronounce Lieutenant Warner in perfect health. The pebble I placed on the floor was a piece of glass with a sharp corner, and with it, not accidentally, as I pretended, but by design, I scratched Lieutenant Warner's forehead. This I did entirely without any previous knowledge on his part of what I intended to do, and I relied upon the result of the experiment to establish his innocence. I succeeded beyond my wildest hopes. You saw him carry his hand to his head, bring it down all bloody, and a few instants later lose consciousness.

"That is precisely what occurred on the battle-field when he was wounded.

"It was the sight of blood and not personal fear that made Lieutenant Warner leave his command when the fight began. If he had not lost consciousness as the result of his wound, you would have seen him perform acts equal in heroism to those whose description I have read to you."

At this moment the excitement of the spectators, which had been rapidly rising while Maynard was speaking, reached the limits of control. Some one started the applause, and in an instant the spectators were on their feet, cheering and waving their hats, and a moment later the crowd surged forward, crowded around Maynard and Lieutenant Warner, wrung their hands, and even embraced them. Probably never before or since has such a scene been witnessed in a court-martial room. The court was obliged to take a recess, during which its members added their congratulations to those of the spectators.

When at last quiet was restored and the court again called to order, at his own request Surgeon Wise resumed the stand and, in a

most manly fashion, admitted the error of judgment which had resulted in the trial, and made a most humble apology for the mistake which, but for Maynard's skill, might have ruined the young officer's whole life. He was followed by the assistant surgeon, and that testimony completed the trial.

. . . . . .

The trial is now many years past, and needless to say, the verdict was "Honorably acquitted." To-day Warner is major in the Commissary Department, and with Frances brightening his home, he is entirely satisfied with his adopted branch of the army.

The Colby Girls.

BY CHARLES BRYANT HOWARD.

OR nearly two days a genuine "southeaster" had been blowing steadily, with cold, driving rain. It still raged when, early in the afternoon of the second day, the Colby girls sat talking sadly in their tiny living room, but it served only to emphasize a gloom whose cause was far more serious than wind or weather. Indeed, to-day these two "girls," so called, even at fifty, by the charitable New England idiom, were confronted by a trouble that threatened to change the entire course of their peaceful life current. Since the death of their father, ten years ago, the sisters had lived alone in their little doll's house of a cottage, remote from the seaboard town whose limits claimed it, yet perfectly content with each other's society, and supported comfortably by their garden and by the most microscopic of incomes.

But now the unexpected had happened: —

An old family debt had come to light; the creditor, living in a far-off city, had brought the law to bear, and this afternoon they had decided that the old house would have to go. Susan had even gone to the length of imagining that "they" would pull it down. "It may be mean spirited," she confessed, "but I'd hate to see other folks that ain't Colbys, nor nothin' to do with them, livin' here; it don't seem right; no, it don't!"

The two troubled spinsters heaved a mutual sigh, and went on with their sewing in thoughtful silence. 'Liza, the elder by a year or two, was stouter than her sister, and of a more easy-going temperament, satisfied to allow Susan to "run things."

"For," as she said, "ef Susan wants ter do the orderin' 'round, an' think up idees, why, I don't, so I guess we're all right." They came of a long line of sturdy Puritan stock, and were as healthy and strong as girls of twenty, doing a long day's work outdoors

and in without a thought of weariness. But though living on the shore all their lives, their nautical experience was limited to an occasional row around to the village in their weather-beaten old dory, a relic of their father's fishing days, and neither of them had ever set foot on board another craft of any description.

It was for the little cove in front of the cottage, where the dory was moored, that Susan started out when, a little later in the afternoon, a sudden burst of sunlight reminded her that she "hadn't had a breath of air for two days."

Meantime, 'Liza, intent on finishing her work, sat placidly in the house, oblivious of the fact that the afternoon was fast wearing away, while her finely shaped head, just touched with gray, nodded and jerked over her sewing.

About five o'clock, however, she was awakened from her torpor by the opening of the door and a rush of fresh air and damp skirts that heralded her sister's appearance.

"My goodness, 'Liza!" Susan exclaimed, "there's a ship outside a-floatin' along all wrecked to pieces; I been watchin' 'em more'n an hour from the bluff, an' the folks on her don't seem to be able to do one thing to save 'emselves! She's goin' straight for Spoutin' Rock, an' they'll all be drowned ef she hits it!"

"Now you don't say so!" exclaimed 'Liza, by this time so aroused as to stop rocking; "better run down an' tell the folks in town, hadn't ye?"

"Land sakes! there ain't half time fer me ter git down there and them men ter git way 'round the bluff in a boat 'fore she hits the rock. No, 'Liza, you and I got ter take the dory an' row out an' help them folks; you hurry up now; git somethin' for your head an' come along. It ain't a big ship, an' I guess the dory'll hold all there be. Don't you waste time talkin', but hurry up and git ready."

"Oh, dear!" wailed 'Liza, flying around with unwonted activity, "ef this ain't the craziest — is my hat on straight?"

"Don't wear a hat!"—snatching it away and substituting a red table-cloth —"here, take this; now come along!"

The two hurried to the beach and pushed off the dory, clambering in and each taking her usual seat, with alacrity born of long practise, and soon their stalwart arms were sending the old boat

toward the mouth of the cove in handsome style. The cove was protected from the wind and was calm as a pond, but outside the sea was running strongly, and though evidently subsiding, was bursting against the foot of the bluff with steady thunder and rush, sending superb clouds of snowy foam far aloft.

"Where's the ship?" inquired Eliza over her shoulder.

"Way out from the Point," Susan answered; "you keep a-pullin' an' I'll steer."

The bluff she had ascended lay between the cove and the village, so that the vessel, whatever she was, probably could not have been seen by the villagers; across the cove was an angle of land known as the Point, and beyond this extended miles and miles of marsh and sand-hills, without a house in sight.

Around the Point, some distance out, lay a solitary reef, marked with a spindle, known as the Spouting Rock. There had not been a wreck in the vicinity within the memory of man, and a life-boat had never been thought of.

The sisters rowed steadily on, Susan occasionally turning her head and altering the course with a deft stroke or two, till they were out of the cove and on the open sea. The wind, while still blowing smartly, had shifted somewhat in an inshore direction; the sea had gone down considerably, but was high enough to set the dory pitching furiously, bringing her flat bottom down between the waves with resounding smacks that sent dismay to 'Liza's soul. But her protestations were cut short by Susan. "Ef it do go to pieces," said she, reassuringly, "we could both swim when we was youngsters, an' I guess we could hang on ter the pieces till we git ashore," a comforting prospect that had hardly its intended effect on 'Liza's spirits; she had no idea of disobeying orders, however, but pulled bravely on with long, clean strokes that soon brought them alongside the "ship."

On inspection the craft in question proved to be a fair-sized schooner, evidently a yacht; the mainmast had broken off near the deck, and lay slantingwise over the crushed rail, with the topmast under water, in a wonderful mess of ropes and canvas, making the vessel careen slightly toward the dory. The foremast, minus its topmast, was still standing with the foresail neatly furled, while the jibs lay in a heap on the forward deck. All

this as told, however, would have been Greek to our heroines, who knew no more about sails and sailing vessels than they did about sampans. What impressed them far more than the vessel's crippled condition was the fact that not a soul was on her decks.

"Well," remarked 'Liza at last, after they had watched the rolling and dismantled yacht for a minute in silence, "'pears ter me we might as well go home agin."

"Yes, I suppose we might's well," replied Susan; "drefful shif'less them sailor folks must be ter go off an' leave a nice boat like that ter be broke up; she ain't floatin' in the water any lower'n she oughter, seems ter me. I s'pose — Mercy! what's that?"

They had allowed their dory to drift nearer the wrecked mainmast, little dreaming, poor ladies, of the unseen dangers beneath the surface, and a heavier roll than usual of the yacht had brought the cross-trees on the mast up against the dory's bottom, which they pierced like an eggshell, letting in a rush of water.

"Good gracious me, 'Liza, we're goin' ter sink!" cried Susan. "Git right out o' this boat quick's you kin!"

'Liza wasted no time in words, but launched herself bodily on to the mast, followed by her sister just as the dory filled. It was not difficult, then, for two active women, with muscles trained by tree climbing years before, to scramble up the sloping mast by means of the sail hoops and rigging; and eventually they found themselves gazing at each other on the yacht's deck in dismayed silence, holding on to the broken mast.

"Dear me, suz!" said Susan at last, "what be we ter do now?" adding with grim humor, "Ain't seed you git 'round so spry for twenty years, 'Liza."

"Guess I wan't much spryer'n you wuz," replied 'Liza, despairingly shaking her skirts; "my land, ain't I wet!"

"Salt water won't do ye a mite o' harm," comforted Susan.

"Tain't any more comf'ble 'n if 'twas fresh," lamented 'Liza. "An' we've lost the dory! For pity's sake, Susan, *what* be we ter do? S'pose we'll be drowned?"

"Now I ain't agoin' ter give up yet, 'Liza. I guess this boat won't sink, an' she ain't goin' towards Spoutin' Rock any more, either; seems ter me the wind's changed. We're movin' along towards the Point now, that's what we're doin'."

"Ef we git amongst them big breakers on the Point there won't be enough left of us ter lay out, Susan, an' you know it!" 'Liza had begun to assert herself.

"We ain't goin' on the Point ef I kin help it; I'm goin' ter try an' sail inter the Cove, I am. Now, don't you say a word. You jest keep cool an' listen; you see that big heap o' sails there," pointing toward the bow; "seems ter me, ef we kin git one o' them part way up, the wind'll blow that end o' the boat 'round, an' then blow us right home. You jest go an' see ef you can't pull one o' 'em up, an' I'll try an' find out how that wheel works; seems ter me they steer big boats with a wheel."

'Liza obediently picked her way to the foremast. "My land, I never see sich a jumble o' ropes in all my life!" she called. "Which d'you s'pose I oughter pull?"

"Keep a-pullin' 'em till you find out," returned Susan, who was turning the wheel first this way and then that, in a vague hope of it's having some definite effect.

'Liza jerked on various ropes until, at last, an end of a wet jib emerged from the heap.

"That's it," called Susan; "keep a-pullin'!"

'Liza hauled away manfully, and the heavy, soaked canvas rose till the wind caught it, and it puffed out sideways like a balloon.

The yacht began to feel the effect and to slowly swing around. "I can't git it up no further," called 'Liza; "what'll I hitch this rope to?"

"Hitch it to that fence there," replied Susan, and 'Liza tied the halliard, with a conglomeration of extraordinary knots, to the rail. "I do' know how sailor folks makes knots," she said gingerly making her way aft; "I tied it like I do a clo'es line."

"I guess it'll do," answered Susan; "we're goin' ahead now, but somehow I can't seem ter do anythin' with this wheel."

"P'raps it'd go better ef all that muss o' stuff was away," suggested 'Liza, indicating the mainmast and sail.

"Sure 'nough, 'twould," said Susan: "wonder ef they got a hatchet; you might open them doors and see," pointing to the cabin companion-way.

'Liza succeeded, after many efforts, in opening the doors, and very slowly descended the steps. She soon reappeared with a

silver handled carving knife in her hand, and under her arm a hungry-looking yellow cat, who was telling her tale of woe in prolonged wails. "Now, kitty," she said, setting the cat down, "don't be scart; we'll take care o' ye. My, wan't it mean ter leave a poor cat shut up down there! I couldn't find no hatchet, but I guess this oughter do," holding up the knife. "My, there's a sight o' nice things in there! Picters, an' lookin'-glasses, an' sofys, an' a lot o' elegant glass things all smashed ter bits."

She began sawing at the ropes, while pussy picked out a dry spot and endeavored to improve her appearance.

"Glad you found the cat," observed Susan; "we need one ter home — oh, my!" — for 'Liza's efforts suddenly resulted in the whole mass, mast, boom, sail, and all, going overboard with a prodigious noise and drifting astern, while the mainsheet snapped with a bang. The yacht instantly righted and began to move ahead more briskly, the wind by this time blowing directly inshore.

"Well, ain't that surprisin'?" said 'Liza, "but it's a mighty shame ter lose all them nice pieces o' wood an' ropes. Where's that cat?"

"She went downstairs like a yaller streak when that noise come," said Susan, who was working vigorously at the wheel. "Oh, goody!" she cried, "I guess I got it now! See, you turn it this way and the boat goes that way, an' 'tother way, so; Liza, we be all right."

And so they were.

Ten minutes later, the little schooner, yawing slightly as the seas swept along her length, but still keeping a good course, sailed by the dreaded Point, and into the smooth water of the Cove. And just as the sun went down, she struck, with a gentle thump, a few yards from the beach, where she lay fast aground on the sand.

Susan sat plump down on the rail. "We did it, didn't we?" she said. "My, I'm all of a tremble!"

"So be I," said Eliza; "but ef I don't git on dry land right off I'll have a fit. We can't git no wetter'n we be, so let's wade. Come, kitty, kitty!"

Kitty appeared and was tucked under 'Liza's protecting arm;

and then the two brave old ladies climbed over the side and waded ashore, thankful and happy that their perilous adventure was comfortably ended.

In this assurance, however, they were disappointed. For a telegram, dispatched that evening by the village postmaster to the yacht's owner, a rich New Yorker, brought down upon them such a flood of legal business as almost turned their heads. Indeed, 'Liza was moved to declare that it was "wuss'n bein' wrecked over again."

But eventually, in consideration of their waiving claim of salvage, which, bless their dear ignorant hearts, they never had any idea of making, a check from the generous-hearted owner was handed them, which made Susan positively scream with amazement, while 'Liza stopped rocking, and gasped, "We be the richest Colbys as ever was!"

"An' we kin buy a cow, an' a new dory, and keep the house, an', 'Liza Jane Colby! we've got a home now for the rest of our lives!"

"An' a mighty good cat," said 'Liza, beginning to rock again.

Trans-Saharan Station 15 — M.

BY J. E. PEMBER.

"*CLINK-CLANK! clink-clank!*"

Three men crouched in the shelter of a hut made of sheets of corrugated iron. They did not stir. They scarcely breathed. The thermometer indicated a temperature of one hundred and thirty-five degrees.

Before the door of the hut rose a skeleton tower of iron beams. It resembled the derrick of a Pennsylvania oil well. Over a wheel at the top of this structure ran a wire rope which, descending perpendicularly, disappeared within a well-like cavity some twenty inches in diameter. The other end was coiled around a drum operated by an electric motor which automatically started — stopped — reversed — stopped — started. Up and down, up and down, moved the cable with monotonous regularity. "*Clink-clank! Clink-clank!*" It was the only sound that disturbed the intense, suffocating stillness.

Outside, the horizon line receded to the uttermost limit of vision in all directions. A level waste of yellow sand met the eye wherever it turned, reflecting the almost vertical rays of the sun with an indescribable fierceness. The atmosphere swam in shimmering streaks.

The enormous palpitating disc of the desert was bisected by a single line of rails which dwindled to vanishing points to the north and to the south. The rails rested on broad bases of metal like huge, inverted soup plates, which enabled the road to lie firmly upon the treacherous sand. Between the rails was placed the insulated cable which brought the electrical current to the motor. A semaphore signal, planted upright in the sand like a contorted skeleton, a few scattered tools, some bits of piping and abandoned pieces of machinery, completed the catalogue of objects of definite outline. The motor buzzed drowsily: —

"*Clink-clank! clink-clank!*"

This particularly undesirable spot upon the world's surface was marked on the map of the new Trans-Saharan Railway as Station 15–M. The railway was the latest audacious engineering exploit of the French. It connected Algiers in a mathematically straight line with Timbuctoo, and was expected to bring the riches of the eastern Soudan to the Mediterranean shores. Station 15–M was full four hundred miles north of the southern terminus, in the hottest heart of the great Sahara, just under the line of the tropic. The three men in the hut were drilling an artesian well that, when pierced, would create an artificial oasis. The drilling apparatus was perfectly made and almost human in its intelligence. It would work for hours without Belleau, the chief, touching a lever.

Belleau was an old gray man, wedded to one idea, the success of the Trans-Saharan. Littlefield, his assistant, was an American, young and enthusiastic. Colet was a student of the Technological school, who acted as helper and general utility man.

"Ah, how infernally hot this is!" muttered Colet at last, as he tried vainly to find a place where it was a degree or two cooler. "What wouldn't I give for a good swim now!"

"Keep still, there's a good fellow," expostulated Littlefield. "You are kicking up this dry sand and it won't settle again in a dog's age. Don't knock all our grub over, either. The Tauregs may stop the supply train, and vegetables don't grow in this country. There! you've gone and done it!"

For Colet had given another roll and dislodged a pile of boxes of provisions which, with a miscellaneous lot of clothing and instruments, came crashing down in a heap.

When they had been restored to their places Belleau awoke from a troubled slumber. He glanced at his watch and then, pulling his coat collar up to shield his neck from the solar heat, crossed the interval between the hut and the tower.

"Four thousand feet," he murmured. "Decidedly in forty-eight hours we ought to reach the water-bearing strata."

By turning a lever he reversed the electric apparatus rapidly and the drum began to wind the wire rope. When it was full another was deftly substituted, and after that a third. Then the

machinery stopped and the heavy metal drill emerged from the black depths of the well, bringing with it a volume of dark earth, which, tumbling down a trough prepared for its reception, poured over the tawny desert sand. It was a curious contrast of hues.

The engineer fingered the soil. It was loose and friable. He smelled it and even tasted it.

"We have not yet reached the belt of clay which confines the subterranean reservoirs," he said.

Once more, with a humming sound, the drill vanished into the depths, the wire rope rattled furiously as it unwound, and then the apparatus resumed its work.

"*Clink-clank! Clink-clank!*"

When the sun declined it was obscured by a curious mouse-colored cloud rising from the west.

"Can it be a thunder-storm?" asked Littlefield.

"Worse," answered the chief; "it is a sand-storm, the terrible simoom. I fear we are in great danger."

With incredible swiftness the "Devil of the Sahara" advanced. Where the three men stood a deathlike stillness prevailed. The outlines of the tower seemed drawn in sepia on a background of fiery orange. Long, snaky fingers of smoke came reaching out over the sky, wriggling fantastically.

Then a wall of gray mist came sweeping over the desert, and the awe-stricken beholders saw the sand caught up in vast, whirling columns. A dull, booming sound, like that of breakers on hidden reefs, smote upon their ears.

"Inside and close the door!" shouted Belleau. The engineers hastened into the hut and secured the door.

In a moment, it seemed, the storm was upon them. The atmosphere became black as midnight. A sonorous hum, like the diapason of some mighty cathedral organ, filled all the dome of heaven. There were sounds of titanic buffetings and demoniac yells. It was as if all the ancient fiends of the Sahara had gathered to overwhelm its presumptuous invaders. Had not the hut been strongly bolted together it would have been torn to pieces. The fiery particles hissed against its iron sides like a discharge of shot. Sand sifted through the cracks until the three men, their heads wrapped in cloths, were almost stifled.

For a moment it seemed as though they were to be buried deep in a living grave. Then, as quickly as it came, the simoom fled away, and the sun, now red as blood, threw his level beams across the plain. The drilling apparatus was not injured. Its delicate machinery was so protected that the sand could not reach it.

Then a terrible discovery was made. Colet, his throat burning with thirst, approached the tank which contained their supply of water. He found the tap open and the tank empty.

The lad gave a cry. His companions rushed to the spot. "All gone — wasted!" he moaned.

It was true. Not a drop remained. When the pile of supplies had fallen over, the tap had been knocked open and the thirsty sand had drunk the precious liquid.

"If the train doesn't get here to-morrow we shall be in a fix," observed the assistant engineer.

Belleau shook his head. "The sand-storm has blocked the rails," he said. "No engine can pass until the plows have made a path for it. That will take many hours, and a man cannot live many hours in the Sahara without water."

"Let us walk to the next station," suggested Colet.

"It is two hundred miles. If one of us tried it he would perish before he had accomplished one quarter of the distance," replied the gray chief. His eyes turned toward the drill.

"There is one hope, then!" cried the American, following the direction of his gaze. "If the drill reaches the water-bearing levels in time we shall be saved."

The old engineer bowed his head silently.

"*Clink-clank! Clink-clank!*"

The long night had dragged away and the garish sun shot into view once more. The three men, haggard, gasping, with parched throats, avoided meeting one another's gaze. The drill had gnawed its way deeper into the bowels of the earth, but there were no signs of water. The frightful agonies of prolonged thirst had set in. The victims neglected to note the passage of time, but lay in a sort of stupor. At intervals the chief tested the borings. "It will soon be over, one way or the other," he whispered to his assistant.

Towards the middle of the afternoon Colet collapsed with all

the symptoms of violent sunstroke. His face became almost black. His pulses beat furiously. "Water!" he muttered, with cracked lips. His companions turned away. Then followed delirium. He murmured of running streams and splashing fountains. Death comes quickly when the thermometer marks one hundred and thirty-five degrees on the Sahara. The poor lad suddenly sprang to his feet, and, staggering from the hut, he put his palms together above his head and dived, as one dives from a river bank, headlong into the black shadow of the tower, streaming across the sand. When Littlefield reached him he was dead.

The sun completed its circuit and sank like a plummet toward the western horizon. Belleau and his assistant feebly tried the boring again. The drill was withdrawn with some difficulty. When it came to the surface it was coated with stiff clay, cool to the touch. The old engineer pointed to it. He could not speak. It was a question of a few hours now.

Belleau, completely exhausted, threw himself down on the sand at the door of the hut and seemed to sleep. Littlefield, lying flat on his back, tried to gaze through the gray depths of the zenith. Suddenly, far above, he perceived a black spot that hovered and circled in a wide orbit. It seemed to be watching intently. A sickness of utter horror and despair came upon the young man.

He approached his chief and touched the shoulder of the still form. There was no response. "Belleau!" he exclaimed, with hoarse emphasis. No answer. He passed his hand over the temple fringed with gray locks. The flesh was chill and harsh. The heart had ceased to beat. The old engineer had passed away as peacefully as a baby goes to sleep within its mother's encircling arms. The drill never stopped.

"*Clink-clank! Clink-clank!*"

When Littlefield opened his eyes again the lids seemed to grate heavily upon the balls. He looked up. The gray sky was gone and the odious black spot with it. It was night, and over the velvet depths of space the imperial tropic stars were passing in majestic procession. They shone with wonderful brilliancy.

The young engineer gazed drowsily at them. He felt strangely comfortable as he lay there upon the sand. The tormenting

thirst had ceased. He did not even feel surprised when he found that his limbs had lost the power of motion. Life seemed concentrated in a small area of the brain just behind the eyes. He perceived nothing but those glorious wheeling stars — some red, some blue, some of a yellow luster.

Then came fleeting visions of a far distant landscape. A New England house, white clapboarded, with prim green shutters,— great elm trees overarching, and the continual gurgle of a brook, flowing underneath a plank bridge,— all the odorous sweets of June were in the air, and he was walking up the path. A slight girl stood at the gate and stretched out her hands to him, smiling angelically with brown eyes that looked clearly into his own.

"Harry," she said, and her voice sounded like the far-away tinkle of a silver bell, "you have come at last."

Then the light went out like a glowing coal, and only the great calm, desert stars looked down pityingly.

"*Clink-clank! Clink-clank!*"

But when the day came again the great drill had ceased its clanking. In those hours of darkness the waters under the earth, liberated from their prison, had burst with impetuous force through the vent, tossed the machine aside, and the first rays of the sun were reflected on the ebullient flood that bubbled up from the well, gushed in rainbow spray around the iron posts of the tall derrick, filled the hollows beside the track with crystal pools, and then hastened by the three dark, silent forms that heeded it not, before plunging once more into the sands that gave it birth.